REPORT TO THE NEW LONDON CITY COUNCIL ON SEVERAL ASPECTS OF A POSSIBLE MARINE MUSEUM IN THE CITY

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report is submitted in response to a request from the New London City Council approved at its meeting of April 16th. The scope of the investigation was developed in discussion with Deputy Mayor Ruby Morris and was approved by the City Manager. The study is confined to three principal questions:

(1) How many visitors are likely to be attracted to a small marine museum, with a submarine as its main exhibit, located at the foot of State Street in New London?

(2) Is New London a suitable location for such a museum in terms of its ability to accommodate the expected volumes of visitors?

(3) What are the potential Federal and State sources of financial aid to assist in establishing a museum in New London?

It must be emphasized that this study is not intended to be a comprehensive evaluation of the desirability or feasibility of establishing a marine museum in New London. Neither is it intended to define an appropriate role for the City in the establishment of such a museum. The data presented on the following pages constitute only a portion of that needed for a comprehensive evaluation of the museum proposal.

II. ESTIMATE OF VISITORS

This chapter addresses itself to the problem of estimating the number of people that would be attracted to the proposed museum and submarine. Attendance data have been collected from other museums and coastal attractions, and an estimate has been made for annual, peak week, and peak day attendance based both on the data and on discussions with personnel of those institutions. The following organizations were contacted: Mystic Seaport; the battleship Massachusetts in Fall River, Massachusetts; The Whaling City Dredge and Dock Company in Groton, which runs the "See Submarines by Boat" excursions in the Thames River; the Submarine Museum and Library at the U.S. Navy Submarine Base at Groton; the Mystic Aquarium; Hempstead House in New London; and the Lighthouse Museum in Stonington. The more relevant data from these institutions is contained in the appendix to this report.

Annual attendance at a marine museum in New London is estimated at 50,000 in the second year of its operation opened to the public and 70,000 in the fourth year. These figures should be considered to be approximate, and in order for them to be realized an agressive advertizing campaign would be necessary. The bench mark on which the figures are based is the current annual attendance of 50,000 at the Whaling City Dredge and Dock Company's "See Submarines by Boat" excursions in Groton. The increase to 70,000 by the fourth year of operation is a worst case estimate intended to illustrate the effect of a high growth rate on traffic and parking in New London. The Whaling City Dredge and Dock Company excursion seems in two important ways to be comparable to the proposed submarine exhibit. The Whaling City operation has good access to Route I-95, and it is agressively advertized. Also, its subject matter contains a comparable mix of maritime and Naval qualities.

Of more importance to New London than the annual attendance are the peak week and peak day figures that can be anticipated in the summer. Study of the data contained in the appendix indicated that roughly 10% of the annual attendance could reasonably be expected to occur in the peak week in mid-August and about 2% of the annual attendance on the peak day. Both of these percentages should be considered approximate. If the annual attendance is taken at 70,000, the peak week can then be estimated at 7,000 people, and the peak day at 1,400 people.

In an 8 hour day 1,400 people would produce a theoretical average of 175 per hour. However, in reality the peak hour might easily be 300 people or more. Based on discussions of attendance on board the U.S.S. Lionfish a submarine on exhibit with the battleship Massachusetts at Fall River, the average visitor can be expected to spend 20 minutes on board the submarine. Also, the

submarine can hold about 100 people at one time.* Therefore, 300 people per hour is about the maximum number that could be accommodated.

It is considered that even though the submarine visit only took 20 minutes on the average, most people would remain in the city - either at the museum or at shops, restaurants and other attractions nearby - for at least an hour. Therefore, the peak parking demand could be at least the cars to accommodate 300 people per hour. Based on a study by SCRPA of visitors to Mystic Seaport, the average number of visitors per car would be approximately 3.5. On this basis, 300 people per hour would create a parking demand for 86 cars. To provide a factor of safety it is recommended that 125 parking spaces would probably be adequate for the submarine and museum on a peak day with about 1,400 visitors. The traffic load on the street network could be increased by about 250 cars per hour during the peak of the summer season.

Information from the institutions contacted shows that the peak day in mid-August will probably be a Sunday, but that a Wednesday may approach Sunday in the numbers of people. Monday and Friday attendance can be expected to be significantly lower.

One final question which should be mentioned is the number of people who might travel by chartered bus. However, these should be a small fraction of the total number of visitors. During the peak season the great majority of visitors should be vacationers who will be travelling by car. Most chartered busses will contain school children and other similar groups who will tend to travel in the spring and fall.

* Conversation with Mr. Paul Vaitses, Director, U.S.S. Massachusetts Memorial Committee, Inc.

III. EFFECT ON NEW LONDON

PARKING

As described in the previous chapter, the maximum number of people who might visit the proposed submarine and marine museum on a day of peak attendance has been estimated as 300 per hour. Such a number of people might require a maximum of 125 short term parking spaces, and might add a maximum of 125 cars per hour to the traffic stream in the downtown streets. These numbers represent the estimated peak attendance in the fourth year after the museum is opened. If in later years the museum should grow, through the addition of other attractions, the attendance might be submstantially greater and might cause a more difficult problem for the City. This possibility should be remembered in considering the museum proposal.

The following evaluation is based on the fourth year forecast given above, and is derived from information received in discussions with Mr. Robert Turk, Director of the New London Redevelopment Agency, and Mr. Philip Michalowski, Development Coordinator for the City.

In the existing parking garage on Governor Winthrop Boulevard there are 406 spaces, and in the existing downtown municipal parking lot there are 325. Construction is expected to start shortly on a new garage near the foot of State Street which will contain 550 spaces, thus making a total of 1,281. Of these, it is currently planned that from 400 to 500 will be short-term spaces.

A peak requirement of 125 cars for the submarine and museum seems to be quite a large fraction of the available short term parking capability, especially in light of the fact that this space is currently intended to be used mostly by shoppers at the downtown retail commercial establishments. However, if a parking problem arises, it would be possible to alleviate the situation in two ways; first by decreasing the amount of parking allocated to long term customers, who would then be forced to park on the periphery of the downtown area; and second, by adding new floors to both the Winthrop Boulevard and Water Street garages. Both garages have been designed so that this is possible, thereby increasing their capacity by approximately 50%. If this were done to both garages, their total capacity would be on the order of 1,500 spaces. The proposed submarine and museum could well hasten the day when such a move would be required.

On Sundays the museum visitors should provide an additional source of revenue to help pay for the parking facilities.

All of the parking will be in easy walking distance of the museum site. The new parking garage will be right across the

street, while the existing garage on Governor Winthrop Boulevard is about 1,000 feet away. The center of the existing municipal parking lot is also about 1,000 feet away.

TRAFFIC

A preliminary examination indicates that the effect on traffic of a maximum of 125 cars per hour visiting the submarine and museum would not be severe. Cars arriving in the downtown area from Route I95 eastbound, i.e., arriving from New York or New Haven, will utilize Huntington Street when the new I95 and Route 32 intersections are completed. Cars arriving from the north via Route 32 and from Route I95 westbound, i.e., from Groton, will use Eugene O'Neill Drive. All traffic headed from the downtown area to Route I95 in both directions, and to the north will use Water Street.

On Huntington Street the average hourly peak traffic flow in both directions is 655 cars in 1973. This peak occurs between 4:00 and 5:00 p.m.(1) It seems possible that the submarine and museum would be open at this hour, and thus if we assume that 65 cars moving to the museum from Route I95 might represent a worst case, then the increase over present levels would be about 10%. The State of Connecticut Department of Transportation design capacity of Huntington Street for 1990 is 1,100 cars per hour.(2) Thus the present 655 cars plus 65 additional cars would give 720; leaving a reserve of 380 cars per hour.

1970 traffic on Main Street was about 25,000 cars per day.(3) The peak hourly traffic estimate derived from this figure is 2,500 cars.(4) On this basis, if the submarine and museum added 100 cars per hour in each direction to this traffic stream, the increase would be 8%. The new Eugene O'Neill Drive and Water Street have been designed by the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation for a total capacity of 3,100 cars per hour.(2) Here the estimated present peak hour traffic of 2,500 plus 200 cars travelling to and from the museum give a total of 2,700 cars, leaving 400 in reserve.

Considering only the impact of a museum, the capacity margins depicted above appear substantial, but they could easily be reduced to very small amounts by further development in the City.

(1) Mr. I. Zevin. State of Connecticut Department of Transportation, Statistics Branch.
(2) State of Connecticut Department of Transportation, Design Branch.
(3) Figure 2, New London Areawide TOPICS Study, 1970, Purcell Associates.
(4) Figure 5.8, page 151, Traffic Engineering Handbook, Institute of Traffic Engineers, 1965.

COMMERCIAL ASPECTS

It appears that for the most part, visitors to the museum would not be interested in the more expensive items for sale in the quality shops of State Street. Most customers for these shops would not be vacationers, but residents of New London and nearby towns. The development of tourist oriented businesses such as sandwich shops and gift shops on State Street might detract from the image that the present State Street merchants desire to convey. However, it seems possible that tourist oriented business might develop along Bank Street. Such development might be helped if museum visitors could be directed to the present municipal parking lot, from which Bank Street would be a logical pedestrian route to the museum at the present railroad station.

SUMMARY

The proposed submarine and marine museum seems more likely to overtax the City's parking facilities than the road network. However, a parking problem perhaps is more easily solved that a problem of inadequate roads. While the specific effect on commercial activity is difficult to predict, the museum might well improve commercial conditions. The major concern in this regard would be to locate tourist-oriented commercial activity where it will not weaken efforts to make State Street a viable year-round retail center.

It should be repeated that an increase in number of attractions at the museum, which would increase the number of visitors substantially, would have a greater effect on the City than that described above.

IV. POTENTIAL SOURCES OF TECHNICAL OR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The following potential sources of assistance in establishing a marine museum in New London have been identified through a review of the literature and personal contact with officials of operating museums, and agencies. For further information, the City should communicate with the individuals noted below.

A. FEDERAL PROGRAMS

1. Department of Interior: Grants of up to 50% of the cost of preserving structures on the National Register of Historic Places are authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Federal preservation grants are made by the National Park Service of the Department of Interior to the State Historical Commission, which may then pass federal funds on to public and private, non-profit agencies. Union Station is on the National Register, and its preservation should be eligible for support under this program. Applications for funds must be made through the State Historical Commission. Information Contact: William Morris, Director, Connecticut State Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, 06106.

2. Department of Housing and Urban Development: Under the Housing Act of 1961 HUD has in the past provided grants of up to 50% of the cost of acquiring and restoring sites and structures of historic and architectural significance. Only public bodies were eligible for funds. This program currently is in abeyance. The Better Communities Act now before Congress includes historic preservation as one eligible use of special revenue sharing funds and would be substituted for the previous HUD program. Information Contact: Lawrence L. Thompson, Director, Hartford Area Office, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 999 Asylum Avenue, Hartford, 06105.

3. State and Local Fiscal Assistance Act of 1972: There is a possibility that general revenue sharing funds received by New London may be used in part to support historic preservation efforts or efforts to establish a new museum. Priority areas of expenditure under this act include recreation, and the act also authorizes the funds to be used for "ordinary and necessary capital expenditures authorized by law." The National Trust for Historic Preservation reports that several communities throughout the country have used general revenue sharing funds to support local museums. Prior to any decision to use general

revenue sharing funds for establishing a museum, the City should seek a ruling from the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Information Contact: Laura Garcia, Coordinator, Office of Revenue Sharing, U.S. Department of the Treasury, 1900 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20226.

4. Smithsonian Institution: The National Museum Act of 1966 authorizes the Smithsonian Institution to provide technical and financial assistance to museums in the training of personnel and in various aspects of museum management. A knowledgeable professional in the museum field has indicated that this program is strongly oriented to training and research but that it might possibly be a source of funds for preparing a detailed feasibility study or museum plan. Information Contact: Director, Office of Smithsonian and National Museum Programs, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 20560.

5. National Endowment for the Arts: Under the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965 the National Endowment for the Arts may make grants to museums of up to 50% of the cost of training programs, special exhibits, and programs to protect and conserve museum collections. Funds are not available for operating expenses, construction or the founding of new museums. Both public and private, non-profit institutions are eligible. Information Contact: Director for Museum Program, National Endowment for the Arts, 806 15th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20506.

6. National Endowment for the Humanities: This endowment was created by the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965. Funds are available to public and private, non-profit museums for developing interpretive exhibitions. The Endowment states: "More than a nominal amount of cost-sharing is expected from all applicants." Information Contact: Director, Division of Public Programs, National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, D.C., 20506.

B. STATE PROGRAMS

1. Connecticut Historical Commission: Section 10-321 of Chapter 177 of the Connecticut General Statutes permits the State Historical Commission to award State grants not to exceed 50% of the non-federal share of acquiring or restoring an historic structure. Grants may be made to a municipality or to a private, non-profit organization. Conversation with staff of the State Historical Commission indicates that Union Station's listing on the National Register of Historic Places should qualify it for State preservation aid. The case for State funds for refurbishing or preserving a submarine is less clear. To date, the State has aided in the preservation of only one vessel, the

"Charles W. Morgan" at Mystic Seaport. In fiscal 1974 the Commission expects to have available a total of only about $50,000 for preservation grants. Information Contact: William Morris, Director, Connecticut State Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, 06106.

2. State Commission on the Arts: The Commission is authorized under Sections 10-369-10-373 of the General Statutes, to provide grants to museums. In the recent past the funds available have been limited, and so they have been used to support special programs rather than construction projects or museum operating budgets. Public Act 73-575 passed by the current session of the General Assembly establishes a Connecticut Foundation for the Arts which will have more resources than were previously available to the Commission. This may permit support of a broader range of projects. Funds from the Foundation will be channeled through the Commission on the Arts. Information Contact: Michael Croman, Grants Manager, State Commission on the Arts, 340 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, 06106.

3. Connecticut Department of Transportation: Legislation passed by the current session of the General Assembly has transferred to the Department of Transportation the grant-in-aid program for harbor improvements formerly administered by the Department of Community Affairs. It is possible that improvements made by the City of New London to accommodate or safeguard vessels for a marine museum might be eligible for State support. Information Contact: A. Earl Wood, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Transportation, 24 Wolcott Hill Road, Wethersfield, 06109.

4. Special State Contributions: This is an uncertain source of assistance. However, the U.S.S. Massachusetts Memorial Committee, Inc., which operates a Naval museum consisting of the battleship "Massachusetts" and the submarine "Lionfish" at Fall River, has obtained significant aid from the State of Massachusettes. According to Mr. Paul Vaitses, Director of the museum, following designation of the "Massachusetts" as a state memorial to veterans of World War II by the Massachusetts Legislature, the state contributed approximately $500,000 worth of services to the project through the operating budgets of various state departments. This avenue, along with the possibility of a special bill to provide a direct cash contribution, should certainly be explored with local legislators.

C. PRIVATE SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE

1. Foundations: Museum personnel suggest that private foundations-local, state, and national-may be a fruitful source

of financial support. Within the scope of this investigation it has not been possible to identify which specific foundations might support a marine museum.

2. National Trust for Historic Preservation: The National Trust operates an assistance program providing financial and/or technical aid to local preservation efforts. Within the past two years some assistance was provided by the Trust for a feasibility study of alternative uses for Union Station. If a decision is made to utilize Union Station for museum-related purposes, the Trust should be contacted to see if it can help in assuring a reuse plan for the building that will preserve its architectural character. Information Contact: Russell V. Keune, Director of Field Services, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 740-748 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006.

3. American Association for State and Local History: This association provides technical consultant services to history museums at no or limited local cost. Information Contact: Pamela Johnson, Consultant Service, American Association of State and Local History, 1315 Eighth Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee, 37203.

4. Veterans Associations: Since the proposed museum will have as its central attraction a submarine, the possibility of support from veterans groups is real. Such support might include funds, donation or loan of mementos associated with the submarine service, technical advice, and contributed services in restoring the submarine. The chances of securing support from veterans organizations would appear greater if the submarine were designated as a memorial by the State of Connecticut.

* * *

Two other possible sources of financial assistance have been explored but do not appear favorable. These are the U.S. Economic Development Administration and the Connecticut Development Commission. At present EDA grant programs are frozen, and it is not clear whether they will be available in the future. Under present criteria New London would not qualify for EDA grants because unemployment in its labor market has not been high enough long enough. The Connecticut Development Commission reported that it does not have a grant program which could assist in establishing a marine museum.

V. APPENDIX, ATTENDANCE DATA

Mystic Seaport

Approximate annual attendance:

1969	530,000
1970	510,000
1971	510,000
1972	510,000

Peak month: 5,300 per day over the entire month (August 1969).

Peak day: 7,000.

Attendance during the week will often match attendance on Saturday and Sunday. Mystic Seaport is open all year, but Winter attendance is comparatively small. For example, the highest day in November 1972 was 517.

Source of Data: Mr. Oliver Denison, Associate Treasurer.

The Battleship U.S.S. "Massachusetts" and the Submarine U.S.S. "Lionfish" Fall River, Massachusetts

Approximate annual attendance:

1966	271,000	This was their peak year.
1971	125,000	
1972	117,000	

Peak week: (Mid-August) 11,000.

Peak day: 2,000.

Monday and Friday are the slowest days of the week. Wednesday often equals Sunday.

The battleship and the submarine are open all year round. However 50% of the attendance is from June 15th to September 15th.

Source of Data: Mr. Paul S. Vaitses, Director.

Whaling City Dredge and Dock Company, Groton

A very profitable discussion was held with Mr. Clarence Sharp on the "See Submarines By Boat" excursions on the Thames River. However, he desires that the actual attendance figures remain confidential, except for his current annual attendance of approximately 50,000 visitors. His season extends from May 1 through October 31.

The Submarine Museum, the U.S. Submarine Base, Groton

The museum is only open to the public on weekends.

Annual attendance:

36,000-38,000 people
Summer daily attendance 350
Winter daily attendance 200

Source: Mr. Stebbins, Chief Petty Officer, USN, Museum Director.